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ARRESTS OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES DURING THE MONTH OF MARCH, 1978

Saturday, March 18,
MAR DEL PLATA.

A group of 19 adults and 3 minors were studying the Bible when some 15 policemen, led by Commisary Screviuk, stormed into the home at Calle F. Sanchez No. 124. All were ordered to leave with their hands above their heads; the Commisary stating: "You are arrested in the name of the Military Junta that governs the country; I am going to raise the flag. . .and I'm going to make you sing the national anthem" (It might be stated that this was not carried out.) In the police precinct Miguel Iarussi, Héctor Mariño and O. Menendez were interrogated: they figure as "Detained for violation of Decree 1867." They were held a total of 45 hours, "incomunicados".

Four other Witnesses came to the police station with food and clothing for their friends; for this they, too, were detained! One man, not a Witness, came to visit his father (who is a Witness); he declared: "I am proud that my father is one of Jehovah's Witnesses." For this he was arrested!

Sunday, March 19
MENDOZA

Jorge Péttina and another male Witness were arrested while visiting from house to house. They were not mis-treated, but were held for 46 hours. During this time the police searched the homes of the two detained, as well as the homes of other Witnesses that figured on a list one of them had. Bibles and Bible literature were confiscated in all of these cases and were not returned.

Thursday, March 23
GRAL. GUEMES (SALTA)

Julio Guerrero of the city of Salta had just descended from the bus ride from Salta to Guemes when a policeman called to him. Upon finding a Bible and a Witness publication in his brief case, the policeman took him to the station where he was held for 33 hours. Through the intervention of a lawyer he was released on a \$60.000 (pesos ley) bond. Upon his release his personal effects (including the literature) were returned to him. The police treated him respectfully.

Thursday, March 23
ANDALGALA (CATAMARCA)

Thirty-two persons met together in the home of Ramón Alvarez to observe the Memorial of Christ's death (The Lord's Supper). Near the conclusion of the event, Roque Ruiz, the conductor of the group, realized that the home had been surrounded by police, but they waited until Ruiz ended the meeting--the policemen baring their heads for the prayer. 15 of the Witnesses were detained "incomunicado" for 6 days after which they were released due to the intervention of a lawyer from Catamarca. The first night of

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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S20000044)
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director
X Release () Excise () Deny
Exemption(s):
Declassify: () In Part () In Full
() Classify as () Extend as () Downgrade to
Date

ir arrest, men and women alike were left in the open-air patio the police station. The second day the women were given sleep-
quarters in the ward of a nearby hospital; this section of the
hospital had no running water which meant they could not care for
their personal hygiene. There was no physical abuse on the part
of the police. However, through their statements they did endeavor
to intimidate the Witnesses, telling them that they would be turn-
over to the Executive Power, that they wouldn't see their child-
ren again, that they could become "missing" persons as so many!
The police did not provide food nor covering. Worthy of mention
is the fact that neighbors and business people of the area volun-
tarily brought food and other necessities to the Witnesses.

Thursday, March 23
CHILECITO (LA RIOJA)

Some 26 persons (adults and children) had met together in the
Ocampo home to observe the Lord's Supper. Following this they were
enjoying refreshments (each one had brought a covered dish) when
the National Guardsmen surrounded the block and raided the home.
They were quite surprised to find a social get-together instead of
a religious meeting! Nine of the group were taken into custody and
held for 15 hours "incomunicados". Their release came due to the
intervention of the medical doctor of the National Guard who per-
sonally knew members of the Ocampo family.

OTHER LOCALITIES

Cases that have been reported during the past few weeks in-
clude:

PUERTO RICO (MISIONES): Ten Witnesses were arrested for meet-
ing together; they were held for 14 days. The group included men,
women and children.

BUENOS AIRES (C.F.): Two cases of arrests reported; two men
detained in one case, a man and a woman in the other; they were held
for 24 hours.

MONTEROS (TUCUMAN): Three women Witnesses were picked up,
their detention lasting three days.

RECREO (SANTA FE): Three Witnesses were arrested for 3 days.

TRELEW (CHUBUT): A group of 19 (6 men, 9 women, 2 children
(and a child of 4 months) were arrested for meeting together; they
were detained for 24 hours.

Tuesday, February 28
CONCORDIA (ENTRE RIOS)

Nicolás Rombolá was talking with a small group of local elders
when the police Commissioner and 3 officers (all dressed in civilian
attire) arrived. After searching the home, with arms bared, the
police took them to the central police station of Concordia. Several
of the group (one a relative of the police commissioner) were freed
after 10 hours. Rombolá and Benitez were held for 24 hours, sharing
a 3 x 3 (meters) cell with some 40 common delinquents.